



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Item Number: 22.

Agenda Date: 12/17/2020

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Arts & Culture

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Debbie Racca-Sittre, Director

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

An ordinance adopting the revised guidelines for Core Grant Funding Programs, a component of the Cul-TÚ-Art Plan.

SUMMARY:

An ordinance adopting the revised guidelines for Core Grant Funding Programs, a component of the Cul-TÚ-Art Plan, in support of a wide range of arts and cultural organizations, events, and projects for the FY22-24 Funding Cycle.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Since 2016, the Department of Arts & Culture developed components of its Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan, a coordinated planning document to guide investments in the arts to provide equitable opportunities that encourage San Antonio's arts community, residents and visitors to thrive in a culturally inclusive environment. The eight individual strategic plans included in the Cultural Plan are: Film (2017), Centro de Artes (2017), Arts Agency Funding (2018), Public Art (2018), Music (2019), Cultural Districts (2019), Performing Arts (2020) and Individual Artists (2020). The San Antonio Arts Commission (SAAC), appointed by the Mayor and City Council, serves as the steering committee for the Cul-TÚ-Art Cultural Plan.

The SAAC also oversees the department's process for funding to arts agencies. Their role is to advise, review and make final funding recommendations for City Council consideration based on the adopted guidelines. Through the Arts Agency Funding program, the Department of Arts & Culture distributes funds to local non-profit arts organizations to enrich the quality of life in San Antonio for residents and visitors. The funds

distributed through this process are from Hotel Occupancy Tax (HOT). By state law, up to 15% of the local HOT collections can be utilized to fund arts and cultural activities. In FY21, City Council approved a one-time allocation of \$1.6 million in General Fund to supplement the non-profit agency funding as HOT collections were down due to COVID-19.

In 2017, the Department of Arts & Culture led a public process to develop Arts Agency Funding Guidelines that are focused on funding allocations being distributed equitably. The Arts Agency Funding Guidelines were adopted by City Council in February 2018. The approved programs, in priority order, include: Festivals, Artist Re-Granting, Culturally Specific Support, Capacity Building and Base Operational Support. These grants, operated on a 3-year grant cycle, are aimed to support a diverse portfolio of art organizations working across the City of San Antonio in the production of on-going, sustainable, high quality artistic activities. In 2018, when the Arts Agency Funding Guidelines were adopted, the Department of Arts & Culture committed to reviewing the guidelines after their first 3-year grant cycle (FY19 through FY21) to determine if the policy changes were accomplishing the goals of achieving cultural equity.

In January 2020, the department began a multifaceted strategic planning process for individual artists programs including analysis of the creative economy, a community and visitor survey, past artist programs, the researching of peer cities best practices, and hosting a series of individual artist focus groups to identify needs, gaps in services, potential new programs and improvements to the current artist regranting and technical assistance programs which are a part of the Arts Agency Funding Guideline adopted by City Council in February of 2018. In March 2020, the Individual Artist Strategic Plan was approved by the San Antonio Arts Commission with four goal areas and several strategies to accomplish the plan's vision - *San Antonio is a place where Artists thrive*. The four goals for the Individual Artist Strategic Plan are:

1. Increase the amount of grant money available to individual artists.
2. Develop opportunities for artists to have proper space to live and work.
3. Provide more education and professional development opportunities for artists.
4. Connect artists with resources and information.

In 2020, the department began an extensive review and input process to determine the impact of the 2018 arts funding policy and to determine if updates are needed prior to opening the next 3-year funding cycle in January 2021 for the next 3-year grant cycle (FY22-FY24). In order to gather this data, the department again released a professionally administered survey of a representative sample of San Antonio residents and recent visitors to San Antonio. Three other surveys were also administered including a survey specifically on the Arts Funding Guidelines which went to delegate agencies, the San Antonio Arts Commission, and the Arts Funding Committee. A survey of Individual Artists as well as an additional Community Survey, that was made available online and through the phone, were administered by the Department. All surveys were available in English and Spanish.

In addition to surveying, the department began benchmarking with other cities, and hosted five virtual stakeholder feedback sessions to collect feedback on the existing Arts Agency Funding Guidelines. The strategic plan for Individual Artists was taken into consideration in the policy changes being recommended for the Arts Funding Guidelines. The policy recommendations for the renamed Core Grant Funding Programs went to the San Antonio Arts Commission and its Arts Funding sub-committee for approval, and to the Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee.

ISSUE:

In September 2020, the department began the process of gathering input to determine if changes were needed to

the current Arts Agency Funding Guidelines policy. The department researched and analyzed best practices and benchmarked nine peer cities, conducted four different surveys, and five focus groups to gather community input on any recommended changes. The surveys also gauged community interest in arts and cultural offerings.

After briefing the San Antonio Arts Commission, and the Commission's Arts Funding Committee, the policy is now renamed *Department of Arts & Culture Core Grant Funding Programs* and the department is recommending the following changes to the guidelines policy:

- Festivals Funding Program:
 - Program replaced with Event and Project Grants (max \$20,000) in order to allow more applicants to receive funding and provide more diverse arts and cultural programming around the city.
 - Allow Fiscal Sponsors and non-profits that are not arts businesses and not federally recognized as 501(c)3
- Agency Capacity Building Program recommended for sunset with associated funding (\$75,000 per year) redirected to Project Grants for Individual Artists as supported in the goals of the Individual Artist Strategic Plan.
- Artist Re-Granting: \$10,000 in funding for Technical Assistance has been removed to allow for these funds to be used by the Department to create training programs requested under the Individual Artist Strategic Plan.
- Culturally Specific Support: Added LGBTQ+ as qualified cultural community.
- Base Operational Support:
 - Requires agencies to be producers of art, no presenters.
 - Set minimum agency size limit at \$50,000.
 - Set minimum grant amount of \$5,000.
 - Using DataArts information on budget size instead of IRS 990s.
 - Remove restriction on length of a programming season.
 - Requires agency to have at least one full time paid staff to administer the contract.

On November 17, the draft policy was distributed to the San Antonio Arts Commission, the Commission's Arts Funding Committee, and posted online for public comment. The revised policy went to the San Antonio Arts Commission's Arts Funding Committee on November 30 for review and approval and then to the San Antonio Arts Commission on December 1. On December 7, City Council's Culture & Neighborhood Services Committee was briefed on the new Core Grant Funding Programs policy.

ALTERNATIVES:

Should City Council choose not to approve the updated Arts Agency Funding policy for the Department of Arts & Culture Core Grants Funding Programs, the department will continue to operate under its current policy guidelines which do not include the funding goals of the Individual Artists Strategic Plan, add LGBTQIA+ to the list of culturally specific communities or restructure the Festivals Funding program to encourage more diverse, smaller events city-wide. In this case, the Department will move forward with an application process beginning early 2021 for the FY22-24 funding cycle using the current Arts Agency Funding Guidelines.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact with this ordinance approval. Awards for the grant programs are subject to the

availability of funding in Department of Arts & Culture's annual adopted budget.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff and the San Antonio Arts Commission recommend approval of the revised policy for the Department of Arts & Culture's Core Grants Funding Program.